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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 002224

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SUBJECT: TUSK DESIGNATED AS NEW POLISH PM

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Classified By: Political Counselor Mary T. Curtin for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary. President Lech Kaczynski designated Donald Tusk as Poland's next prime minister on November 9, as expected. Tusk promised to unveil his recommended cabinet tomorrow, November 10. Presidential advisor Michal Kaminski confirmed that the cabinet should be sworn into office on Friday, November 16. The Civic Platform-Polish Peoples Party (PSL) coalition is taking shape. We expect PSL leader Waldemar Pawlak to be Deputy PM and Minister of Economy. Tusk confidant Grzegorz Schetyna will also be a Deputy PM and Minister of Interior and Radek Sikorski will be Foreign Minister. Schetyna told the press that Bogdan Klich is likely to be MOD, and Bogdan Zdrojewski the new Minister of Culture. As PM-designate, Tusk will present his national program and the Sejm will hold a vote of confidence. That vote is expected during the week of November 19. Tusk assumes office once the vote is passed. End Summary.

¶2. (C) We expect that the new government will be a strong and steady ally to the United States, easier in some aspects than the outgoing Kaczynski government, but presenting its own challenges. As opposed to the stark top-down style of Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Tusk is viewed as more of a consensus builder. Naturally he will seek to put his imprint on critical issues such as missile defense negotiations. European neighbors are bullish on Tusk, but their optimism should not overwhelm their good sense. Tusk's party (and Poland as a whole) is still far more conservative than its counterparts in other EU states, and like its predecessor, strongly Atlanticist. Poland will play a more constructive role in the EU, with a more polished approach. But it will continue to show a willingness to pursue its national priorities, even in the face of opposing EU consensus.

Bio Note on Tusk

¶3. (C) Tusk will bring real strengths to his new post as Prime Minister, including an ability to learn, to change his views and to seek compromise. However, he has never held any state administrative post, and has never been responsible for leading and steering any state bureaucracy. He is a self-professed political junky, and has proved skillful at mastering party mechanisms to outmaneuver and eliminate political opponents within PO, including most recently Jan Rokita and former Finance Minister and Deputy PM Zita Gilowska, who moved to Law and Justice (PiS) when she was drummed out of PO in 2005. Tusk is reserved in nature. Earlier in his career he was not considered serious or hard-working, and seemed anxious to escape Warsaw to maximize his time in his beloved Gdansk. His lack of punctuality was

legendary. This reputation dogged him through the 2005 electoral loss, when he was viewed as not stepping up to the challenge posed by the Kaczynskis. The image persisted during the most recent (2007) race, until he delivered a rousing, aggressive performance in his one televised debate with Jaroslaw Kaczynski. In recent years, Tusk has been aloof in his contacts with the USG, turning down most requests for meetings, even with senior U.S. officials. When he has met with Embassy officials, he has been measured and thoughtful, correct, but not warm in demeanor. In a highly Catholic country, Tusk was in earlier days ostentatiously anti-clerical, but now described himself as a "believer with a difficult past." He had his civil marriage blessed in the Catholic Church only in the run-up to the 2005 elections. He speaks some English, but not fluently, and will prefer to speak in Polish with foreign officials.

¶4. (C) Tusk's cabinet is taking shape and should be appointed as early as next week by President Kaczynski. Radek Sikorski, despite the dust up between Tusk and President Kaczynski, is expected to be Foreign Minister. Sikorski brings experience and enormous strengths to this position, but will have a tense relationship with the presidential chancellery (Law and Justice--PiS--officials have branded him a "traitor" for abandoning PiS before the elections), which surely will seek to play an expanded role in foreign policy. PSL leader Pawlak told the DCM on November 7 that one of his Sikorski's deputies will be PSL's Jan Borowski, who served as an Undersecretary at MFA in the early 1990's.

Jockeying for the MOD

¶5. (C) We now expect, after statements by Tusk confidant Schetyna, the new Minister of Defense will be Bogdan Klich, who served as the Deputy MOD between 1999-2001. Klich is an

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European MP (elected in 2004), and served in the Sejm from 2001-2004, on the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committees. Klich runs a think tank with his wife in Krakow, the International Center for Democracy Development. He allegedly volunteered himself for MOD, after the initial candidate, Bogdan Zdrojewski, was deemed too independent from and by Tusk. Zdrojewski apparently was elected PO caucus leader in the last Sejm session without first seeking Tusk's and Schetyna's imprimatur, and Tusk is reported to be wary of Zdrojewski's own ambitions. Zdrojewski is expected, instead, to be named Minister of Culture.

Timing of the Vote of Confidence

¶6. With Tusk's designation as the next PM, Poland is now in transition to the next government. Presidential Chancellery official Michal Kaminski told a press conference on November 9 that the new cabinet will be sworn into office on November

¶16. Tusk has said he does not expect to take the formal step of presenting his government for a vote of confidence next week, but rather during the following Sejm session during the week of November 19. Once he presents his formal national program and passes a vote of confidence, he will assume office formally.

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